

“For the time is coming when people will not endure sound teaching, but having itching ears they will accumulate for themselves teachers to suit their own passions, and will turn away from listening to the truth and wander off into myths.”

2 Timothy 4:3-4

Two thousand years ago, St. Paul warned his young friend Timothy that no matter how clearly God’s Word is taught, there will always be some who want to change it to suit their own ideas and their own concepts of what God “really meant” to say to us. Today it sometimes seems that these false teachings are coming at us faster than ever before. And what makes these false teachings so dangerous is that they come to us from established religious organizations that claim to be truthful to God’s Word – when, in fact, their seemingly well-intentioned actions are nothing less than the work of those who would lead people away from the truth of God’s holy Word.

One recent example is a decision at a national meeting of the United Church of Christ (UCC) to remove the term “heavenly Father” from the denomination’s constitutional definition of the local church. Any references to “God as heavenly father” would now be replaced by “the triune God.” Explaining the change, which represents a trend in gender-neutralization seen in this and other religious organizations (including a new version of the popular NIV Bible), UCC spokesperson Barb Powell was quoted as saying: “In the UCC, our language for God, Christ and the Holy Spirit ... is preferred to be more open for different expressions of the Trinity. Heavenly Father is just one vision.” She went on to say: “We will tend to change language that is more traditional to be more inclusive.” She also noted that many UCC pastors and congregations refer to God as “Creator” or “Father and Mother,” rather than maintaining a masculine designation.

Huh? Referring to the first Person of the Triune God as “heavenly Father” is just a “vision” – one of many “visions” representing how we think of God? And should we not refer to God by a masculine designation?

Scripture clearly teaches that God the Father is always – I emphasize, **always** – mentioned as masculine. As is true of many languages, nouns in the Hebrew language are either masculine or feminine. Whenever the word “God” is used in the original Old Testament, it is a masculine noun. It is always a masculine noun. The word “God” never appears in the Old Testament as anything other than a masculine noun.

The same is true of the original Greek text of the New Testament (although the Greek language also includes “neutral” nouns that are neither masculine nor feminine). Whenever the name “God” appears in the New Testament, it is always – and again, I stress **always** – a masculine noun. Over and over again Jesus refers to God as His “Father” – also and always a masculine noun. And when Jesus teaches us the words of the Lord’s Prayer in Matthew 6, the original Greek text begins with these words: “Πάτερ ἡμῶν ὁ ἐν τοῖς οὐρανοῖς” (literally “Father of us the one in the heavens” – or as we more commonly pray, “Our Father who art in heaven”). It is simply impossible to apply the UCC thinking that this language could or should be more “inclusive” or gender-neutral when God’s own inspired Word is perfectly consistent and perfectly clear.

Why am I making a big deal about this issue? Why should we care? Because the UCC has more than one million members in the United States, and they are clearly being taught false doctrine and being led away from what Scripture says. And unfortunately, this is not the only religious organization that is moving in this direction.

So what should we as Lutherans do? First, we should pray – pray that God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit would lead those misguided church bodies to see their errors, that they would repent, and that they would return to true teachings of Scripture. And second, we should pray that God would keep us firmly grounded and secure in His word, so that we may never have “itching ears” and never turn from the truth of God’s Holy Word.

In Christ,

Pastor Terry O’Brien

Congratulations

... to all members of St. Paul Lutheran Church who are celebrating birthdays or wedding anniversaries during the month of August. Please send any additions or correction to Barb Turner in the Church Office.



August Birthdays

- | | | | |
|----|--------------------|----|------------------|
| 2 | Matthew Merrifield | 15 | Dave Matthews |
| 3 | Joshua Merrifield | 15 | Whitney Matthews |
| 5 | Barb Turner | 17 | Mary Jane McGee |
| 9 | James Gordon | 19 | Katie Ashcraft |
| 9 | Marilyn Halbrook | 22 | Lacey Bockewitz |
| 9 | Irene Preiksaitis | 22 | Allison Kresin |
| 9 | Anna Simac | 24 | Jacob Ashcraft |
| 10 | Joshua Simac | 24 | Sonna Livesay |
| 14 | Wayne Miller | 31 | Al Leonard |



August Anniversaries

- | | | | |
|----|---|----|--|
| 2 | Jason and Becky Easton (8 th) | 24 | Robert and Johnna Schloz (38 th) |
| 16 | Randy and Kerstin Allen (27 th) | 25 | John and Pat Williams (38 th) |
| 23 | Heath and Ramona Miller (15 ^h) | | |



Serving Our Lord in His House during August

Ushers:

- Adam Cross, Head Usher
August 7: Jeff Bockewitz, Larry Durbin
August 14: Kim Kresin, Jason Simac
August 21: Rich Amling, Rick Wilcox
August 28: Tim Karbach, Wayne Miller

Greeters:

- August 7: Wayne and Joann Miller
August 14: LouAnn Horsley, Kelli Smith
August 21: Lee and Chris Eilers
August 28: John and Sonna Livesay

Communion Assistant: Buck Miller

Elder on Duty: Todd Bockewitz

Altar Guild: Joann Miller, Carol Wilcox

August 2011

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
	1	2 6:30 Bible Class	3 9:00 Bible Class 6:30 Adult Instruction Class	4	5	6
7 9:00 Bible Class 10:15 Divine Service	8 6:30 PM Elders Meeting 7:30 PM Church Council Meeting	9 6:30 Bible Class	10 9:00 Bible Class 6:30 Adult Instruction Class	11	12	13
14 9:00 Bible Class 10:15 Divine Service	15	16 6:30 Bible Class	17 9:00 Bible Class 6:30 Adult Instruction Class	18	19	20
21 9:00 Bible Class 10:15 Divine Service	22	23 6:30 Bible Class	24 9:00 Bible Class 6:30 Adult Instruction Class	25	26	27
28 9:00 Bible Class 10:15 Divine Service	29	30 6:30 Bible Class	31 9:00 Bible Class 6:30 Adult Instruction Class			